



## STATE EMPLOYEES CHALLENGE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION TO REFORM COLORADO CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

BY TROY A. EID  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DPA

LA JUNTA – Just a week after kicking off public hearings across Colorado, the Governor's Commission on Civil Service Reform has already met with more than 500 classified state employees. Here at Otero Junior College in La Junta, the message from state employees is all too familiar: Colorado voters need to modernize Colorado's civil service system – a system largely unchanged since it became part of the state constitution in 1918 – to meet the serious challenges our workforce faces today.

"We need to get rid of the 'rule of three' in employee selection," says one man, a 26-year veteran of the Colorado Department of Transportation, echoing one of the most frequent criticisms expressed so far by employees during these hearings. "Why don't we just let the State choose from everyone who is qualified for a given position, instead of just limiting ourselves to three people who are good at taking written tests – or who had the tests written by their friends so they alone could pass them?"

Jim Rizzuto, President of Otero Junior College and a former state lawmaker and cabinet officer, takes the microphone to explain that the "merit principle" is vitally important to protect line employees -- especially those in non-supervisory positions – from political cronyism. Yet Colorado's outdated civil service laws have been warped over the years to create a "spoils system for bureaucrats."

"Too often, selection tests are rigged to ensure that the person most acceptable to the bureaucracy gets the job," Rizzuto points out, to nodding heads from the audience. "We ought to scrap the rule of three and have an open selection process based on qualifications. Job security is important for line employees, but we ought to make more

of the supervisory positions at-will. That way, supervisors can be more accountable for their performance, the same way college and university administrators and executive directors [of state departments] are."



*Chancellor Richard L. Byyny welcomes Troy and the Civil Service Reform Task Force to the CU Campus.*

predecessors, Governor Owens' 12-member commission, co-chaired by former Democratic Governor Richard Lamm and myself, is reviewing the current civil service system to ensure that it keeps pace with the changing needs of state employees and taxpayers.

Here at Otero Junior College, the discussion covers a range of issues affecting Colorado's constitutionally based civil service system, including employee selection, retention and termination; the role of classified employees in state colleges and universities; and issues relating to state contracting and outsourcing. It would be difficult to characterize the specific ideas and concerns raised at each of the Commission's first round of public hearings – in La Junta, Pueblo, Canon City and Fort Collins – but certainly they run the gamut. There are, however, some common threads that link these sessions:

*Please see TASK FORCE, p. 2*

Created by an executive order issued by Governor Owens in March, the Civil Service Reform Commission ([www.colorado.gov/dpa](http://www.colorado.gov/dpa)) is the latest in a continuing bipartisan reform effort stretching back at least to the 1950s. Four times since the original 1918 system was written into our constitution – in 1944, 1970, 1976 and 1986 – Colorado voters have considered various amendments to the current system. Like its

**1. Concerns that the system is generally too rigid and inflexible, particularly with respect to employee selection and discipline.** For instance, well over 100 employees have called for eliminating the rule of three, with only a handful speaking in its favor. The perceived difficulty of effecting discipline within the current system is also widely expressed, especially among law enforcement officials. Constitutional prohibitions limiting the hiring of temporary employees to six months are also unpopular.

**2. Within higher education, one size does not necessarily fit all.** Some employees want to remain in the state classified system. Others would consider or even prefer leaving the state system if more locally administered alternative systems – perhaps run by the institutions themselves or their governing boards – could provide similar legal protections and continued PERA eligibility for the affected employees.

**3. Current constitutional limitations on privatization and outsourcing are undermining private investment that might otherwise be used to expand the capabilities of state employees.** The targeted use of private contractors – for instance, in CDOT highway construction projects, and in private prisons – enjoys broad support so long as state employees get the training and resources needed to manage the contracts effectively. In particular, more private investment in information technology systems would help state employees respond more quickly and completely to the public's needs.

During the next three months, the Commission will continue holding public hearings throughout Colorado. A complete hearing schedule is available on the web site. Now as in years past, Colorado's state workforce will be better off as a result of this ongoing discussion. Please take a moment to attend at least one of these hearings or e-mail us with your thoughts. The more people participate, the better our civil service system can meet your needs.

## KUDOS

Kevin Book of Mail Services, Frank Brysacz of Dispatch and Melissa Wilkerson of Quick Copy received a note of thanks from Gil Lopez for the outstanding service they provided the Police Corps in Golden. Melissa was able to scan, copy and bind 50 sets documents on a very tight deadline, once the order was complete she followed the instructions on the order sheet and sent it to mail services for delivery.

Later that day the customer called to check on her order and was informed that it was completed and routed for delivery. The customer then explained she had failed to notate that they wanted to pick up the order at the North Campus Facility. Working with Kevin and Frank, Gil was able to get the order returned to North Campus where the customer was able to pick it up without further delay. Working as a team they were able to help our customer meet her deadlines.

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Robyn Hawes received a kudo from John Cisneros for giving him a fast turn around on a rush order for brochures. "You really are a professional and talk about customer service, WOW!"

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The Archives Web Team received the following email from a visitor to our web site:

I will be traveling through Colorado @ the end of the month with my family. This site is tremendous!!! I am putting a packet of information together about all of

the states we will go through and yours has been the best so far. Thanks for making it so accessible!

Kelly Bauder  
Scotland, SD

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Gil Lopez received this note of thanks from a student at Southeast Elementary School in Brighton. Gil donated 11 boxes of paper that the state was unable to use.

Dear Gilbert,

My name is Kaylee. I live in the city of Brighton, I am 10 years old, I attend Southeast Elementary School. My teachers name is Mrs. Vigil, I plan to use the colored paper for my science expo project.

Your new friend,  
Kaylee

# May Employees of the Month Capitol Complex Snow Removal Team

In March, we experienced one of the largest snowstorms in Denver's history and the Capitol Complex crew performed exceptionally well under the circumstances. The entire crew pitched in to assure we kept up with the wet, heavy and deep snow. The following are lists of individuals that went far beyond their regular hours to provide extra effort.

The grounds crew of Daron Gil and Irodis Bouris led by Gary Yeager and Steve Ziemann started Tuesday morning with the initial snow removal. Paul Sandoval and Robert Abeyta of the maintenance staff assisted them. Steve arrived at 3 a.m., the grounds crew arrived at 4 a.m., Gary Yeager and the maintenance staff arrived at 5 a.m. They worked throughout the day with the assistance of the entire maintenance staff.

On Wednesday, an emergency crew of Steve Ziemann, Irodis Bouris, Paul Sandoval, Robert Abeyta, Dave Belmear, Greg Phillips, Ernie Atencio, Mike Vigil and Ray Groves braved the elements to provide on-going snow removal. In addition, Steve Ziemann stayed the entire night.

On Thursday at 5:00 a.m. Steve Ziemann, Paul Sandoval, Robert Abeyta, Daron Gil and Gary Yeager were at it again. When the remainder of the crew came in, they worked the entire day on clean-up while still responding to maintenance calls.

It should also be recognized that on Tuesday night Ben Martinez and Frank Wanczyk, custodial supervisors, were the only staff that could make it in to provide the custodial service at the Capitol Building. They remained to provide service to the Capitol in order to assure that it was ready for the next day despite having to brave the ride home late Tuesday night.



1st row- Ben Martinez, Mike Vigil, Frank Lombardi, 2nd row-Irodis Bouris, Ernest Atencio, Paul Sandoval, David Belmear 3rd row-Daron Gil, Gary Yeager, Steve Ziemann, Troy Eid, Frank Wanczyk, Greg Phillips, Robert Abeyta. Not pictured Ray Groves.

The entire crew put forth a tremendous effort during a very difficult time and is to be commended.

This month's other nominees included DHR's Iris Goodrich for her sustained level of outstanding customer care, teamwork, and positive outlook. The Executive Office's Employee of the Month is Connie Winters for her excellent customer service. Harry McDonald is the DoIT Employee of the Month for leading a DoIT Technical Team in a fast-paced, one week test of a large operating system conversion. Ron Keller is the DFP's Employee of the Month for doing an excellent job in taking the lead and revitalizing the statewide Internal Audit Forum (IAF). Supervising Administrative Law Judge Bruce Friend and General Services Unit Team Leader Rick Walker are the DOAH employees of the month for their dedication during the "Storm of the Century" - making it into work on all scheduled days - Judge Friend and Mr. Walker worked diligently rescheduling hearings, redeploying staff to cover essential functions, and keeping the Division doors open during a very trying time.

## PEGGY SEATON RETIRES AFTER 33 YEARS OF STATE SERVICE

This past April, DPA said goodbye to longtime employee Peggy Seaton. Peggy has worked for the State of Colorado for 33 years and has been with Archives since 1977. While her work has touched many within the state system, she is best known for creating the Colorado State Web Site, one of the most user-friendly sites on the Web. She has also worked as the site Web Master keeping it up-to-date and managing an impressive number of links.

During her retirement celebration, Peggy was presented with a plaque from State Archivist Terry Ketelsen and her

fellow Archive employees and a letter from Governor Owens thanking her for her many years of state service. But perhaps the most touching is the Colorado State Flag she received from the state and her daughter. The flag was flown over the state capitol on Easter Sunday and will serve as a thoughtful reminder of her years working for our State.



State Archivist Terry Ketelsen presented Peggy with a plaque celebrating her work at Archives.





# EMPLOYEE COUNCIL CORNER

BY MIKE SEXSON, PRESIDENT  
DPA EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

Hello Everyone,

Well, summer is finally here, and the Employee Council is gearing up for the Annual Employee Appreciation Picnics. We are really looking forward to making them an enjoyable celebration for all. This year the North Campus Picnic will be held on July 29, the downtown picnic will be July 30 and the Kipling picnic will be July 31. The Pueblo picnic will be held in September in order to accommodate their workload and avoid the hot weather.

We have also been collecting recipes for a DPA cookbook that will be available prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. Many DPA employees have submitted recipes and this cookbook is sure to become one of your favorites for years to come. The cookbook sale is yet another fundraising activity that your employee council works so hard on in order to finance our annual picnics and fall celebrations.

I would like to thank all the Employee Council members for all the hard work they have done so far this year. There are a few members that have really made an impact in helping with the council's success this year and I would like to acknowledge them. Julie Postlethwait is the coordinator for all fundraising that the Employee Council does. So far this year, we have had a couple of book sales, the Butter Braid Sale and of course the See's Candy sales. We are now in the process of putting together a Cook Book with recipes from all DPA employees. Thank you, Julie, for all your hard work in making sure things run smoothly.

Jill Vaughn is serving as Treasurer this year and is in charge

of keeping track of all the council's finances. I have a hard enough time keeping track of my own bills at home, so it amazes me how easy she makes it look when it comes to the council's bookkeeping. She keeps the records updated to the day and knows where every penny comes and goes in the Employee Council bank accounts. Thank you Jill for all your work as Treasurer!

Judi Karg is the Vice President of the Employee Council and also in charge of State Gear Sales. I work for Central Collections, and the past 4 1/2 months have been involved in the tax-offset program, which happens every year at this time and it takes me away from all my extra activities like the Employee Council. Judi has been my backup when I have not been available to help out with Employee Council business and has done an outstanding job! Thank you Judi for being there when I couldn't be. This is just a small example of what these folks do on the Employee Council while at the same time still doing their normal jobs for the State. By volunteering for the Employee Council they are donating a lot of their free time, so if you see some of these folks, stop and tell them "Thank You" for all their work on the Employee Council.

Thank you.

Mike

## 2003 EMPLOYEE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Admin. Hearings/Personnel Bd.	Roslyn McMillon (Secretary)	303-764-1400
	Mercy Fischer	303-764-1400
Central Services (Pueblo)	Hallie Lee	719-545-5294
Central Services (Downtown)	Sylvia Santistevan	303-866-3970
	Kelly Tyler	303-866-2326
Central Services (North Campus)	Rene Ahl	303-866-3888
	Teddy Abad Perez	303-866-3881
Executive Director's Liaison	Paul Farley	303-866-6212
Executive Office	Laura Blake	303-866-4223
	Julie Postlethwait	303-866-6095
Finance and Procurement	Mike Wallace	303-866-6143
	Mike Sexson (President)	303-866-6552
Human Resources	Judi Karg (Vice-President)	303-866-2391
	Vicki Bottenberg	303-866-4220
Information Technologies (TMU)	Cathy Buckles	303-866-6356
	Jill Vaughn (Treasurer)	303-866-6119
Information Technologies (Data Center)	Celestine Bryant	303-239-4359
Information Technologies (Telecom)	Susan Perez	303-866-2913

# Profs and Cons

BY PAUL FARLEY

Over the past month my work with the Civil Service Reform Commission has taken me to public meetings across Colorado. One of the first ones was in Cañon City, home to the Territorial Correctional Facility, affectionately known as "Old Max" to those in the prison biz.

Afterwards, I stopped by the Colorado Prison Museum (motto: "Do time with us!") located in Cell House 4 of the former women's prison, just outside of Territorial's eastern wall. The exhibits, which are either morbid or entertaining, depending on your mood at the moment, feature fixtures, photographs, and examples of contraband.

Territorial has been home to thousands of felons since it opened in 1871 (including aspiring gourmet Alferd Packer), and has seen 78 executions, and the museum features both the noose used in the last hanging and the gas chamber. However, visitors will search in vain for "Old Sparky," since Colorado has never used the electric chair.

Before I left I asked the woman at the desk about the state government legend about how the prison came to be located in Cañon City. The story goes that when the Territorial Legislature first met in 1861, there was all sorts of horse-trading and jockeying (I assume you would trade your horse before jockeying it, but I'm no expert on such things) over big-ticket items in the legislature. Denver got the capital, and Cañon City chose the prison, thinking it would be a more steady source of revenue, leaving Boulder with the university. (It rather reminds me of the joke I heard years ago in Washington, D.C.: "New Jersey has the greatest concentration of toxic waste dumps in the world, and D.C. has the greatest concentration of lawyers - why is that? Because Jersey got to choose.")

A week or so later, I was in Boulder, and after stopping by Mork and Mindy's house at 1619 Pine Street (really!), I went to the University of Colorado Heritage Center to search for an answer. The docent there knew of the legend, but could not confirm it. She suspected that there was probably some truth to it, but the fact that the prison opened in 1871 and the university in 1876 suggested that maybe there was less to it than people think.

As it turns out, Golden lost out to Denver in its bid to become the capital, and was awarded the School of Mines instead. Pueblo wanted the university but ended up with the state hospital, and at least one source says that Fort Collins got the Agricultural College (now Colorado State University) after Cañon City decided it wanted the penitentiary. Some say it was decided by a coin toss, but

more reliable records show that Cañon legislators backed Denver's efforts for the capital and were rewarded with the prison, on the theory that "it would be better attended and less noisy than the university." In a bizarre twist resulting from someone's odd sense of humor, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was named as one of the university's original trustees.

Although the University of Colorado now existed on paper, it was not provided any funding. In the years that followed there were attempts to change the law and thereby move the inchoate institution. In 1874 Pueblo took another run at taking the territorial capital from Denver, and Cañon City was angling to take the university from Boulder. According to newspaper reports, in the end Boulder legislators cut a deal with the Denver delegation to maintain the status quo. There is also the story of how one night in January 1874 the legislature gave preliminary approval to a bill to provide \$15,000 to get the university off the ground -- if the people of Boulder would donate a matching amount. Boulder legislator and Speaker of the House David Nichols immediately left the Capitol, and rode through freezing drizzle for five hours, arriving in Boulder around 11:00.

Nichols put a friend in charge of getting the pledges, changed horses, and rode back to Denver. When the time came for the final vote the next morning, Nichols was there in time to announce that he had just returned from Boulder and that the necessary money was being raised, and thus the university was saved.

So, it looks like Cañon City may have most wanted the prison all along, and only later tried to get the university as well. The whole truth may well be lost to history.



"Na-noo, na-noo, Mindy!"

Many thanks to Terry Ketelson for his assistance in preparing this article. Additional information drawn from William E. Davis, "Glory Colorado!" (1965) and Frederick E. Allen, Mark S. Foster, Ernest Andrade, Jr., Philip I. Mitterling, and H. Lee Scamehorn, "The University of Colorado 1876-1976" (1976).

## *This and That:*

- Also at the CU Heritage Center is the College of Engineering and Applied Science flag and CU football carried by alumnus Ellison Onizuka aboard the ill-fated flight of the space shuttle Challenger.
- In addition, if you've ever wondered what happened to "Wonderboy," the bat used by Robert Redford in the film *The Natural*, it's there too.

